
Training and News for the Seattle Auxiliary Communication Service

ACS Holds Spring Meeting

TOPOFF 2 Exercise and Messaging Featured

On Saturday, May 31, the Spring meeting of the Auxiliary Communications Service was held at the Seattle Public Utilities Operations Control Center on Airport Way South. The meeting began at 9:00 a.m. with approximately 25 people attending.

Mark Sheppard, N7LYE, presented a summary overview of the recent Topoff 2 training exercise. He reviewed the major events and described how communications were employed. Especially noteworthy was the use of video. Fixed and mobile video cameras were used to send images to the Emergency Operations Center from various locations around the TOPOFF exercise area

as well as other locations throughout the Seattle area. Mark also played a video that further described the exercise.

A discussion of "real world" scenarios that would accompany various emergency situations was led by Bill Dockstader, W7LSK. Since most ACS members will deploy to community centers in the event of a major disaster, discussion fo-

cused on how best to handle communications at the community centers. It was noted although it will be possible to operate from those centers with only one person, it will be much better to have two or more present. Members were encouraged to plan ahead, to think through how they will carry out their communications responsibilities from the community centers.

The general meeting wrapped up with a general question/answer session conducted by Mark Sheppard, N7LYE. After the meeting a small group met to discuss the upcoming Field Day event. They decided to meet again June 14th, at



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QRV?

QRV? = "Are you prepared?"

*QRV? is the Newsletter of the Seattle
Auxiliary Communication Service*

City of Seattle
Emergency Management

ACS Net & Disaster Coordination
Weekly Net, Mondays at 7:00 p.m.
146.96 MHz

ACS Primary Message Channels
441.80 MHz (tone 141.3 Hz)
443.00 MHz (tone 141.3 Hz)
443.65 MHz (tone 141.3 Hz)

ACS 6 Meter Frequency
53.250 MHz (tone 100 Hz)

ACS Website
www.cityofseattle.org/eoc/acs

State & County Nets
Washington State Emergency
Mondays at 6:30 p.m.
Saturdays at 9:00 a.m.
3.985 MHz

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King County ARES
Sundays at 8:00 p.m.
146.82 MHz (tone 103.5)

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From the Editor

Change

Have you noticed? There have been changes to the format of **QRV?**, three to be exact. First, perhaps you saw that the big **QRV?**, logo on the front page looks different. If you did, you were right! It has changed and now is actually a combination of two fonts, Arial Black for the text part and "Radios in Motion" for the code part.

You may also find the text a bit easier to read. That's the second change. I've bumped the size font up from ten to twelve point. I did this in an effort to make the text a bit easier to read. I don't know about you, but the older I get the more I've come to appreciate *readability* in printed text.

The third change is not so easy to spot. In fact, it's a change that's pretty much impossible to tell from just reading **QRV?**, because it is a change in the software I use to create our publication. For years I used good old PageMaker, first the Aldus and then the Adobe versions. Now I'm using Microsoft's Home Publisher. The move to Publisher was the result of my laptop being stolen but that's another story.

Since we're on the topic of changes, I have a question for you. Are there any changes you'd like to see in **QRV?**

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From the EOC

By Jim Mullen, Director
Seattle Emergency
Management

Since our last visit in this newsletter, there have been a couple of events that have been highly significant. One was very personal, and the other I was able to "share" with about 10,000 people in this country and Canada. Of course, the latter event was the TOPOFF 2 terrorism exercise. The other was my journey to Sri Lanka to keynote the South Asia Regional Conference on Disaster Mitigation and Urban Infrastructure Financing.

Both events had profound impacts on me, personally. And, like TOPOFF, the Sri Lanka experience needed some time to settle in so I could begin to articulate what it meant for me. In this column, I'll address both, but I may have far more clear-cut perceptions of the Sri Lanka experience than of the TOPOFF experience. All of us are just beginning the sorting process on T2.

When I embarked for Sri Lanka on March 9 the war drums were beating. In fact, at times there was concern that this conference might be cancelled. Fortunately, events/diplomatic moves slowed the pace of the march to hostilities, and the conference went on. The Conference was

sponsored by the US Agency for International Development (US AID) and several consulting firms that specialize in economic development in Asia. Ten countries were represented, including the US. Others were Indonesia, Thailand, The Philippines, Laos, Vietnam, India, Nepal and Bangladesh as well as the host, Sri Lanka. In my keynote remarks I described our Project Impact program, made reference to the SDART Program, and urged them to avoid falling victim to the ailment that convinces governments, and even emergency managers, to use the excuse that “I can’t do anything without money”. My view has always been that while money helps, it is possible to gather resources that are already present within the community and organize them in such a way as to improve your community’s disaster resistance. In a sense, ACS provides a glowing example of this, and was one of the references incorporated into my remarks.

For what it is worth, here are some of my summary comments:

“All disasters are local, and the most profound impacts are local. Damage averted (a plug for mitigation) is a significant achievement. Mitigation measures cannot be viewed as “extras” – they must become routine efforts. Finally, communities must pool their talents and their resources, identify their risks and their priorities, and do what they can. This will

allow locals to manage outside resources more effectively if they ever become available. Do not depend on outside assistance to sustain needs that have been locally identified, and keep control of outside assistance that is “here to help.”

TOPOFF: it was an intense and challenging week.

If this sounds a lot like our approach in Seattle to ACS and emergency communications, there is a reason. We have tried to practice what we preach.

The conference, even with the international situation smoldering, was a very valuable event. The delegates were financial and government experts who appear very interested in disaster mitigation. Several actually had visited our web site, and a couple of them were pledging to try to learn more about ACS.

I thought of these colleagues in the middle of TOPOFF- a “real” news item caught my eye because it detailed the disaster in Ratnapura, 60 miles from Colombo, and a city that we vis-

ited before my return. Our hosts were grappling with a real life emergency (floods and landslides), while we were wrestling with the requirements of a terrorist drill. We paraded through Ratnapura back in March, celebrating Disaster Mitigation Day. People lined the streets, and a middle school band led us around. Awards were given for noteworthy essays and drawings and paintings by children on disaster mitigation. It was inspiring to participate, and it was sad to see the news that as many as 200 of those people may have lost their lives last week. The projects in Ratnapura are the result of some incredibly wonderful work by our government and others, interested primarily in the humanitarian and economic development needs of others. Even those who seemed alarmed at the direction the world appeared to be heading in back in March were also appreciative of these efforts by USAID.

Back to TOPOFF: it was an intense and challenging week. ACS staffed the City EOC with three people for many hours, and coverage was accomplished for the 36 consecutive hours of field play. One of the exercise artificialities was that all systems would most likely work, allowing field play to continue. So, ACS, which has already proven itself to our satisfaction, did some monitoring and some standing by. From our

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perspective, knowing that ACS personnel were ready and trained was important to our peace of mind.

And the result of all of this will be more drills, and our ongoing gratitude to all of you who stand with us to help sustain this community. Thank you again. - - - - -

Field Day Planning Meeting

Saturday, June 14, 9:00 a.m.
Ballard Denney's Restaurant

Meeting, from page 1

9:00 a.m., at the Ballard Denny's restaurant to further develop plans. There appeared to be general agreement that it will be well to scale back the field day effort this year.

Operators Needed

Are you interested in filling ACS posts at the emergency operations center? If so, please check with Bill Dockstader W7LSK for further information. Bill can be reached via e-mail at: w7lsk@arrl.net. - - - - -

Editor, from page 2

More how-to articles? How about lists of web or other resources for emergency communications? Letters to the editor? Games? Comics? Crossword puzzles? Seriously, I'm looking for ways to improve qrv and would appreciate any suggestions you'd care to offer. Be warned though, if I hear from you I may enlist you as a contributor to qrv?. Really, that might not so bad. Occasionally contributors even receive rewards. Just ask WA7BVQ. - - - - -

QRV? - Seattle ACS

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